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BACKGROUND OF OUR LIVES

*Thoughts Stirred by the Passing of Boris de Zirkoff
and by the Life of Dedicated Members of the
Point Loma Theosophical Headquarters*

Background: a flower, a perfect rose; but against a sheet or board of the same color, where is its beauty? It lies unrevealed; there is no background. But placed against natural greenery nearby, and Background returns beauty and brings meaning to Foreground. Or Greek temple: white columns and entablatures come alive and tug at the heart only when seen against shall we say background of sun-splashed Attic blue? Or a star, caught in a fork of eucalyptus tree; only deep background of night brings it intimately near.

Today I sit at the open-air Greek Theater on Point Loma. This view, I recall, had been described some thirty years ago as of 'surpassing beauty'. But now in honesty should not the adjective be dropped? If analyzed, there is still a cool beauty of line and form; but between Doric pillars no crest-foamed waves break, no stretch of ocean draws the eye to faraway horizon. The old natural canyon, chaparral covered, that ran down to the sea has been bulldozed to flat terrain useful for athletic field, and distance is blocked by a solid screen of close grown trees. Background has been snatched away. All now is foreground, practical, utilitarian. We are limited to the Immediate, without support and challenge and poignant beckoning of a Beyond which brings vision *and* meaning.

When one leaves us whom we have known long and well our thought lingers on the life just ended, pondering its significance, yes, and its mystery (for all of our lives in a strange degree are a mystery). And our thought moves beyond a single individual to embrace the many who through the swift-moving decades of this century have been friends, fellow-students, fellow-searchers of the mysteries of life.

Ruminative thought today centers not only on these brief life-moments of association but reaches out to what is beyond, what may be called the Background of their lives. For it was not only Foreground of individual decision that brought these several hundred in 1900 and the following years to Point Loma and the theosophical nucleus and the School established there; it must also have been some ancient love, some unbreakable link revived, some driving energy out of the past, purposive and persuasive. For among the varied group were students of Blavatsky, supporters of Judge, followers of Katherine Tingley. We forgo listing names; they are too many for

this recounting; but all are loved, all remembered, all respected. Each one was the personal actor on the stage of his or her own choosing this life; but each was also part of a background group-drama, held together by Idea and Ideal as represented in Theosophical teaching studied and practiced. And, again, Background of that background were the past lives of each. One seemed to catch some inkling of ancient continuity of the Thread-Self bringing opportunity again to work together.

Those who were part of that community do not need to be reminded of the program there, a beehive of activity from early morn to night; literary and editorial work, planting of trees and orchards, growing of vegetables; humming of printing presses; bindery and photo engraving; classes in the School; music and drama rehearsals and the sound of piano, violin, cello, orchestra, chorus, and band, and weekly concerts; arrival and entertaining of distinguished visitors; tireless preparation of meals and kitchen work. (All this is well reported in Greenwalt's *California Utopia, Point Loma: 1897-1942*.) To those living for many years at Point Loma, and especially to those who grew up there from earliest childhood, it was a world complete.

Into all this stepped Boris de Zirkoff*, young, slender, made trimmer it seemed by his sharp pressed suit, by his little black mustache, his European bearing and manner. He would be staying in this new milieu for the next

*Writing on a postcard to me on October 15, 1980, Boris recalled: "I met K.T. at her lecture in Grand Hotel, Stockholm, August 19, 1923..." It was, as I well remember, in the latter days of December of that year that he arrived at Point Loma, his traveling expenses paid by Mme. Anna Wicander, a prominent Theosophist in Sweden. The February 1924 issue of *The Theosophical Path* in its "Theosophical Items of Interest" reports the arrival, and quotes Mr. de Zirkoff as follows: "My relationship with Mme. H. P. Blavatsky is through my mother, Lydia de Baschenoff, born de Hahn. Her father, General of Infantry Dmitry de Hahn, a member of the Council of the Empire, was a cousin to Peter de Hahn, father of Mme. Blavatsky. To my knowledge there are no nearer relatives of Mme. Blavatsky now living, than my mother and I, all other members of my family, as that of Mme. Blavatsky, being dead earlier, or having been killed during the Revolution." (Mr. de Zirkoff's father was a colonel of the Imperial Guard; and his stepfather, Boris de Baschenoff, during the War was Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Army.)—W.E.S.

sixteen years, himself actor on his own individual stage, but yet part of the drama, of the background, of this new community. For those growing up in these surroundings from earliest childhood, as said, it was natural home, the hundreds of members and students from all walks of life, from a dozen or more countries, natural family. For one new it must have been strangely, if appealingly, different—this school, this education, this living together and rubbing of personalities—and have called for a bit of adjustment. He would be working in the Outdoor Department, he would be teaching classes in French, and later he would be a worker in what we called the TS (and ES) Office, where J.H.Fussell was head, and where I also worked for 16 years. Some years later, in the 1930's, he would be making monthly visits to scientists of the Mount Wilson Observatory, Pasadena—to whom *The Secret Doctrine* was not unknown—carrying to them the message of Theosophy. (Two of them, Dr. Albert Merrill and Dr. Gustaf Strömberg, spoke at the open forum lectures on a Sunday afternoon in the Temple at Point Loma.)

But first, in those early months of arrival, off with the little black mustache. He would be in the play, to be given in a month or so, be one of the soldiers and they were all clean-shaven. Was it *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? So he dressed as a Greek and held a spear and marched with the others on to the arena of the Greek Theater at the right time. He was part of a new Background.

He lived first at Pioneer Cottage, near the main Headquarters Building, and some 50 or so yards from the Boys Department where I had a room in No. 10 Home. Of an evening he tapped on the typewriter keys, and the next day would often bring over to me a carbon of an article by HPB. He had started on his quest, the compilation and editing of the writings of Blavatsky.

A committee was soon formed to pursue this project. Marjorie M. Tyberg, Professor of Literature and History at Theosophical University, was Chairman, and Boris and others were members. At that same time, in England, the same idea had struck the minds of R.A.V.Morris and Trevor Barker; they too were engaged in a similar compilation of Blavatsky's works, but when they heard of the Point Loma program they threw in their efforts with them and sent their collected material to the central committee. And so between the years 1933-36 the first four volumes of *The Complete Works of H.P.Blavatsky* came off the press in London, published by Rider & Company. But alas the plates for all those volumes were destroyed in the bombing blitz of WWII.

Meanwhile the work at Point Loma continued until the removal of Headquarters to Covina, some 90 miles east of Los Angeles, in the early summer of 1942, six months after the USA had entered the war. By that time, because of economic problems, those who could afford to left the Headquarters and sought a home elsewhere with family and friends (Kenneth Morris, for example, had

returned to Wales, H.Percy Leonard to England). Boris moved to Los Angeles and, first for some dozen years from the home of Sven and Alice Eek where he had been welcomed, and later from his Theosophical Information Bureau, pursued unflagging and practically singlehanded his Blavatsky writings work. And we know now that Volumes 13 and 14, concluding the series, are presently in the hands of the printer, and that thus a work visualized more than a half century ago is nearing completion.

A story, rich in incident and stirring in meaning, could also be told of numerous others of the Point Loma Family, but beyond these personal histories, Boris' recent passing brings again to mind, as always at these times, a pondering on the meaning of life and—backgrounds. *What are we? Who are we?* And Theosophy answers in ringing tones: we are the Eternal Pilgrim; we are essentially the godself within. Emanating as unselfconscious god-sparks, so to say, at the beginning of each cosmic manvantara, we are essentially that Enduring Spirit which involves itself into matter and then rises again in the long evolutionary course to become consciously one with the Divine (and later, at the right cyclic time, to continue our journey on a higher plane.) We raise the lesser to become the nobler, the Animal Monad to become the Human Monad, the Human to become Divine. That is the long enduring drama. That in simple words takes us beyond the foreground of our brief today and gives us knowledge of the long and meaningful Background.

The Reincarnating Ego plays varied roles on the stage of human life. The parts seem cruel or unjust or meaningless: we dash on to the stage, we recite a few lines, we experience a mild or telling discord or rapport with other characters; and then—the crushing end. And for the too, too many, the sanctimonious platitude drummed into the plastic mind from earliest years that forever thereafter, *forever* (being first judged—by whom?) they bask in a heaven of eternal bliss or burn in the flames of unending hell. Where is logic, where is mercy, where is virtue, where is just sheer manliness and decency in this!

But Theosophy changes the picture. It brings background to our lives, so that foreground, our present life, has logic, has meaning, has reason, has purpose. We recognize the architecture of our inner being because we can discern a far distant horizon that tells of a Divinity in which we, and all things, are rooted. And knowing this, duties of today have renewed purpose.

Before my eyes troop the actors of those long ago Point Loma days, and we think once more of their individual lives, of their communal life, of the background of being one among many; and, again, background of the Self, the Reincarnating Ego, the Undying Pilgrim who lives life after life, growing, evolving, reaching upward, revealing more and more in thought and performance the treasury of the Inner Self. What would Foreground be without the knowledge of Background beyond and beyond and beyond...?

—W.E.S.

THE COURAGE OF OUR CONVICTIONS

This is a phrase which, for Theosophical students, has profound psychological and moral significance. Implicit are the ideas of struggle, conflict, self-reliance, and the sovereignty of private judgment; as well as truth, steadfastness, virtue, and devotion. These are ideas which may be seen to define the progress and purpose of man's evolution.

In chapter two of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Krishna outlines the entire philosophy in terms of the immortal spirit in man. The context of the discourse is a battle; of the outcome, Krishna says: "If thou art slain thou shalt attain heaven; if victorious, the world shall be thy reward." Psychologically, this suggests that what Arjuna actually has, what he really is, is not affected by the results of conflict. This means that the purely philosophical pursuit of TRUTH must be the basis of our convictions. And since truth in an absolute sense is identified with that immortal, changeless spirit within us (the Higher Self), the truth of our convictions must also be changeless.

To have a conviction is to take a stand. This immediately calls up opposing forces in our nature, and also in others. The conflict is inevitable and in conflict is the danger of defeat. But the defeat is only defeat in a limited sense, because the object of struggle is truth itself. Just as the Higher Self is neither the warrior nor his opponent, but the witness of both, so is Truth, that which we know to be true, unaffected by the opposition of contrary views.

But what is the nature of this knowing? It is certainly not the mere holding of an opinion, for there are as many opinions as there are humans. Nor is it simply "belief," which is often the tacit acceptance of ignorance. Truth is not acquired by reason alone, since reason organizes perceptions into general statements about the nature of things. This is a kind of knowledge, but knowledge is also the understanding of illusion—that is, the relation of subject and object, the knower and that which is known. Illusion is based on dualities. Absolute Truth is one and therefore higher than the most complete acquirement of knowledge. Yet we nonetheless have a feeling for what truth is. There are Those who know the truth because they *are* the truth. And it is the devotion to an ideal, as embodied in the Masters of Wisdom, which is the object of our search. This is the idea which, through its imperfect realization in ourselves, must lead on to action.

The mind is the great battlefield, while the armies drawn up on either side represent opposing ideas. The ability to hold two opposing points-of view in suspension is a unique capacity of self-conscious thought. We can view the ideas, analyze them, and choose one over the other. But there is another quality of the human mind which transcends the duality. The Soul which "looks directly upon ideas" is neither one idea nor the other, but may include both. We have the ability, by the exercise of discrimination and *will*, to create a synthesis of the opposing views, making a whole which is not subject to the limitations of one or the other. This is the unifying quality of wisdom,

which draws on eternal truth. We seek that point within ourselves, the very essence of our being, which is constant and immovable.

"From the time when the Delphic oracle said to the enquirer, 'Man, know thyself,' no greater or more important truth was ever taught. Without such perception, man will remain ever blind to even many a relative, let alone absolute, truth. Man has to *know himself*, i.e., acquire the *inner* perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is *the symbol of Eternity*, and no *finite* mind can ever grasp the eternal, hence, no truth in its fulness can ever dawn upon it."—('What Is Truth?' by H.P. Blavatsky, originally published in *Lucifer*, I, No. 6, Feb. 1888; see also *Blavatsky, Collected Writings*, IX, 34.)

—Reprinted from *Theosophy*
(U.L.T., Los Angeles), Sept. 1980

HEART AND HEAD UNITE

Henry T. Edge

What impresses one most in these Theosophical studies is the marvelous unity of thought that prevails throughout. The Theosophist does not (or should not) keep his religion and his science in separate compartments, each pining for the loss of its partner; his deepest devotional feelings are illuminated by knowledge, and his studies made sacred by his understanding of their meaning. Heart and Head unite in one and are not at war. The meaning of these sacred symbols should enter deeply into our heart, and not be left as a barren and interesting pursuit. Our life here seems all ends and beginnings because our view is so contracted that we cannot discern the unity and wholeness.

Here we are reminded of that spiritual Sun, which, universal, has its focus in every heart of man—man, the world in miniature, a solar system of planets in rhythmic motions attendant upon their Lord; and we may rise in thought to a forgetfulness of our petty limitations. Through such a symbol illumination may come, so that we may re-enter our humble world renewed and strengthened for the duties we perform. Know that thou art a Sun, whose function is to illumine all, not to expect benefits. Thus man will rise to his true dignity, fearing neither God nor Devil. Man is deathless, infinite, in his essence; nor is the quality of that essence beyond his reach. At any moment of our life *I am* immortal, eternal; "end and beginning are dreams."

—Extract from *The Universal Mystery-Language of Myth and Symbol*, Ch. 2 'The Circle'

READER'S NOTEBOOK

The Needed Unifying Truth

Sometimes in the course of a single day, while reading or watching television, one comes upon two conflicting concepts of the same subject. Here is one example:

In Dr. Carl Sagan's closing number of his recent televi-

sion series on the stellar universe one phrase of his was impressed on my mind: "That vast and ancient universe from which we sprang."

And from the distinguished theologian, Abraham Heschel: "What man seeks to understand is not his animality but his humanity. He is not in search of his origins; he is in search of his destiny."

But origin and destiny cannot be separated, no matter how aeons' long the progression of cyclic experience we must pass through.

Somehow in Dr. Sagan's illumined phrase we catch adumbrations of that supernal destiny that awaits man in the dim mists of the future.

On the other hand, Heschel's implication of our "animal" origin makes the possibility of our flowering into a noble and spiritually illumined humanity more difficult to comprehend.

Too long has the animalistic theory of our heritage shackled man's mind and thwarted his efforts to rise above it. Let him be taught a chapter from the Ancient Wisdom: Man came into existence on the spiritual plane as an unself-conscious spark of divinity, destined after cycles of evolution to return to unity with the divine essence from which he sprang.

Let us hope that this simple yet exalted truth might be given to our young people in our schools. It is simple; it is inspiring, and it is bound to bear good fruit.

—S.A. Tarryton

EVOLUTION—POINTS TO REMEMBER

Larry M. Cook

I think some of the most important points to remember on the subject of evolution are:

(1) That man is essentially a spiritual being, a Monad, as are all beings and things, on a great journey of self-realization, a 'pilgrimage through eternity,' all ever growing, learning, and becoming progressively greater in knowledge and understanding.

(2) That man is not a soulless 'naked ape,' evolved from apes, but rather that man is of a separate line of evolution of his own, which has a spiritual basis rather than a dead soulless materialistic one. That it is the apes that sprang from the early human stem and not vice versa.

(3) That life is not merely the result of a chemical accident, a chance event of nature, without any intelligent or spiritual basis. That there is a spiritual element, a Monad, which is the inspiring element in and behind evolution.

(4) That the possibilities of evolution extend even beyond the material realms into spiritual realms beyond human comprehension. Evolution provides the promise that one day mankind will evolve beyond his present state of ignorance and self-slavery, and become consciously a co-worker with nature, till at last man becomes more than man.

AND WE QUOTE...

(We quote here a few paragraphs from notes by Boris de Zirkoff which he left with Point Loma Publications on one of his several visits here in 1980. They are jotted down under date of Sunday 15/XI, 1925, some months after his arrival at Point Loma. He comments on a meeting at which Mme. Tingley had spoken briefly, followed by Mr. J. H. Fussell, Frederic MacAlpin, Dr. Ross, Mr. Hamilton, Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Beale, and B.de Z. We give his exact words.

—EDS.)

"The meeting closed with the usual song and the silence, fol. by the invocation.

"The remarkable thing about it was the intensity of the surrounding atmosphere, the spiritual *tension*, so to say, of the air. It was as if something (some phenomena) might have happened; I felt as if a *presence* of some higher being in the midst of us. If one were to throw some object in the air, it might have stayed in the space hanging, such was the impression on me. It was the collective tension of our aspirations.

"Mad. Tingley appeared small and tired when she came in; she appeared higher and cheerful when she left."

[An earlier note is dated 1/vi/25; and reads:]

"Some remarks about what Mad. Tingley told on April 19th 1925 at the Headquarters meeting after supper. —She gave a wonderful talk on the mystery of consciousness of the Higher Nature—'Like a bird when it can use its wings... Impossible to describe such a sense of freedom... You can then do anything and no longer be limited or bound. It grows upon you; it creeps in. *But there is a dark river to cross first,*' she said.

"Furthermore she added: 'Once across this which I can only describe as a Dark River, and the whole world changes its aspect. How ridiculous the ordinary pleasures of life look and the troubles drop out of sight as so petty.

"The real life you enter does not come in a sudden way so that you can say now all is changed for me, but very gently, but it is unmistakable when it comes. Oh, it is so great! But the Dark River has to be passed first.'

"The wording was much more beautiful and poetic, but that is how I remember it.

"In the afternoon meeting in the Temple of Peace she made a great address on H.P.B., the Masters, and the ideal of manhood, or man's possibilities. Here are some few points: —'The inner life is going on all the time, although you may not know it... The Divine is seeking its own. —*H.P.B. was a seer, a mystic and an Initiate.* —Do not look in doors or outside for God.—Find your God through experience. —*The mystic is one who has spiritual understanding and has begun to apply it.* —To fashion his life by it. —The thought-life is Life. —The inner knowledge comes to your rescue at Death, the great adventure of the Soul."

The Key That Fits Them All

Occult Science... still holds the Key to all the world problems.

Let us apply that Key to the rare fragments of long-forgotten cosmogonies and try by their scattered parts to re-establish the once Universal Cosmogony of the Secret Doctrine. The Key fits them all. No one can study ancient philosophies seriously without perceiving that the striking similitude of conception between all—in their exoteric form very often, in their hidden spirit invariably—is the result of no mere coincidence, but of a concurrent design; and that there was, during the youth of mankind, one language, one knowledge, one universal religion, when there were no churches, no creeds or sects, but when every man was a priest unto himself. And, if it is shown that already in those ages which are shut out from our sight by the exuberant growth of tradition, human religious thought developed in uniform sympathy in every portion of the globe; then, it becomes evident that born under whatever latitude, in the cold North or the burning South, in the East or West, that thought was inspired by the same revelations, and man was nurtured under the protecting shadow of the same TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

—H.P. Blavatsky: *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 341

ADDITIONS TO "SEARCH AND FIND: Theosophical Reference Index"

Recent issues of the *Bulletin* of Corresponding Fellows Lodge of Theosophists (England), edited by Mrs. Harry Benjamin, list additional references to her book (No. 1 of Point Loma Publications Study Series). We give some here, and others in later issues, as those who use *Search and Find* for study may wish to add them to their own copies—

—EDS.

ACCIDENT: unforeseen event, word used to hide our ignorance SOP 296

BOEHME, Jacob: (add) Full description of, ECHOES II 100-5

BUDDHIC PRINCIPLE: First veil of divine individuality, treasure-house of collected reaped experiences. Negative unless working through Manas SOP 343

CATACLYSMS-RACIAL: Destiny of great nations BCW V 163-71

CELL: new, an infinitesimal focus of cosmic forces channeled through to physical plane MAN EV 198

CHAKRAS: named and explained MAN EV 259-61

CIRCULATION OF THE KOSMOS (add): Begins at highest point of Kosmic Hierarchy, continues down to lowest material HPB MYST 120

DEATH: simply transfer of vitality from this plane to interior plane SOP 327

ETHER: (add) SDI, 13 fn. (This is an important addition because the 'lower aspect destroyer' does not appear in the definition on p. 57)

EVOLUTION: (add) nothing but progressive self-expression MAN EV 264; (add) what it is and what it is not MAN EV 85-107

FAIL — FAILURE: "To fail would be nothing, but..." JUDGE LETTERS No. vii

HEREDITY: (add) psycho-magnetic attraction by means of reincarnation MAN EV 290 *et seq.*

HUXLEY: Believes in Beings higher than man ECHOES II 313

HYPNOTISM: (add) His personal opinion, should be banned by law ECHOES II 106; temporarily living on thought-vitality of Operator SOP 410; brought about by expelling higher part of man from lower quaternary SOP 413

KÂMA-LOKA: ("Can we help those in...?") Leave them alone. Do not try to enter into communication with them. Nature's methods always kindly and just SOP 511-12

KALI-YUGA: Aryan Race beginning it SOP 639-50; For entire 5th Root Race will last some 427,000 more years SOP 701-3

KARMA: (this word is misplaced in text; should be on p. 78, not 77, just after *Alan Kardec*)

KINGDOMS: 3 & 7 listed and described HPB MYST 64-5

MAHÂ-GURU: Silent watcher of this Globe. Sends its Ray for Tibetan Lamaic Hierarchy, not from Gautama Buddha SOP 612-13 & SD I 208

MAN: (add) Holds within himself history of all inferior types MAN EV 195

BOOK REVIEWS

The Secret Doctrine, by H.P. Blavatsky, new definitive edition, edited by Boris de Zirkoff, Two volumes, plus separate Index and Bibliography. Published 1978-79 by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, India. Price \$40.00 (U.S.) per set.

Yet another edition of *The Secret Doctrine*? Yes, and in this instance a welcome one. This is the latest addition to the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* series—and another feather in the cap of the series' compiler, Boris de Zirkoff.

This particular edition is an important milestone. It is the first time since 1895 that the Theosophical Publishing House (or its predecessors) has published an S.D. which is faithful to the original edition of 1888. The new one still might not please the absolute purist; however, two facsimile original editions are currently available from

the Theosophy Company and the Theosophical University Press. At least the new 'definite' edition maintains the same pagination as the original; and indeed, the changes that have been incorporated into it are unlikely to generate the same degree of ire as did the much-altered 3rd and 6-volume editions, of which the less said the better.

According to the Editor, the principal changes involve: a few single words to make the meaning of sentences clear; a few changes in punctuation; and correction of obvious typographical errors. Also, as many quotations as possible have been verified, and corrections made as necessary to conform to original texts.

In addition to *The Secret Doctrine* itself, this edition includes the following:

- “Historical Introduction: How ‘The Secret Doctrine’ was written. This was previously published as *Rebirth of the Occult Tradition* (reviewed in C.T., Jan.—Feb. 1978);

- Approximately 80 illustrations, including portraits of persons mentioned in the text, astronomical photographs, etc.

- A new General Index, of some 400 pages;

- A Concordance, or Conversion Table, relating all published editions of the S.D. to the original;

- An extensive bibliography containing information on works quoted in the S.D., plus two appended bibliographies on works pertaining to the Esoteric Philosophy, and on works closely related to subjects discussed or referred to in the S.D.

The new index is particularly interesting. The Editor describes it as “...primarily an Index of *ideas* and only secondarily of words, terms, proper names and titles of quoted material.” Nevertheless, it is obviously a very practical index, and I would say by far the best yet produced. The bibliography, too, is an excellent feature.

To what is otherwise a welcome and worthy addition to the *Collected Writings* series, it is disappointing to have to record a critical note. The quality of the paper and the binding of this edition is very poor. For a work with such valuable contents, and one which is likely to be consulted for a lifetime by most purchasers, these physical characteristics are unacceptable, and it is to be hoped that efforts will be quickly made to rectify this situation by improving the standard of both paper and binding.

One is staggered by the amount of work that has obviously been put into this edition by Boris de Zirkoff. Words are inadequate to express thanks to him, but no doubt he will feel his efforts well worth while with the thought that future generations of Theosophical students will benefit greatly from these volumes.

—Ted G. Davy, *The Canadian Theosophist*,
Jan—Feb, 1981

(The following is quoted from a recent issue of *I Quaderni Dell 'Eta Dell 'Acquario*, edited by Bernardino del Boca, Turin, Italy.—Translation by R. Vosse, of Capetown, S.A.) *California Utopia, Point Loma: 1897-1942* by Emmett A. Greenwalt.

The praiseworthy theosophical publishing house, Point Loma Publications, Inc. (P.O. Box 6507, San Diego, Calif. 92106, U.S.A.) has reprinted a book which had become unobtainable, “*California Utopia, Point Loma: 1897-1942*” (254 pp. \$5.95 paper; \$9.95 cloth) by Emmett A. Greenwalt who is professor of history at the California State University, Los Angeles. The first edition of this extremely interesting history of the most successful and courageous of all efforts to practise Theosophy, especially at the educational level, was published in 1955 by the University of California under the title “*The Point Loma Community in California—a Theosophical Experiment.*”

During the course of a century, the State of California has seen the creation and ending of many utopian undertakings, but only the Point Loma Theosophical venture has left a strong mark all over the United States. In his preface, Iverson L. Harris says that “the Point Loma community has disappeared, but the spirit that inspired it, that illumined it and kept it going for 45 years cannot die.” It is a book that sets one thinking, that inspires one to live Theosophy in the best way, namely with an eye to the generations that are taking shape with trust and with love. No theosophical group or new theosophical Aquarian community can do without this book.

A Sense of Values by Lewis Chase, Philosophical Library, New York, 72 pages, hardcover, \$7.50.

Lewis Chase is the pen name of a professor at a southwestern university. He is also a part time operator of an equipment manufacturing concern. He writes and speaks with conviction and expertise.

As a technologist he believes that almost no solutions to the world's problems can be effective unless they (the solutions) are deeply rooted in a sense of values that transcend philosophy, art, political systems, dogmatized religions, educational mores, or technology. He does not quite use the words “innate spiritual values,” but he should. He is thoroughly western in his approach and a deeply motivated Christian. With rapierlike slashes he sums up the aforementioned philosophy, art, political systems, *et al*, and ends in one magnificent chapter *On Values and Those Who Have Them*. He has them. It makes the book. They are worth hearing about.

—K.G. Heck

Listen... The Speaking Heart by Doris. De Vorss & Co., Marina del Rey, California. 1980.

This can be a helpful book to everyone who is consciously or unconsciously responding to the beat of the planetary heart—all is one, all is one... The author deals in soul experiences which are universal. The book stimulates the emotional and intuitional aspects of the human entity. She has an inner grasp of symbology, parapsychology, and spiritual intent. I am sure that when she speaks her impact is infinitely greater than even the well-turned words of this work. How about taking it?

K.G.H.

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Pervin Mistry, Mississauga, Canada: I have now read *OM, The Secret of The Ahbor Valley*, and I am sure once is not enough. I was amazed at the depth and insight of all its characters. I can say very truthfully that neither the people, their ways, or their habits have changed even the slightest bit in half a century! India is just the same. People still spit on the roads; they still blame everything on everybody else; they still love to squat on the roads; gather crowds for any reason; and everywhere you turn your gaze you see a most remarkable contrast in wealth and poverty. Adjacent to every single high-rise you will see a colony of huts. "Sathus" abound on the streets—there are as many real ones as are the ones who simply don the robes parading the streets for alms—the jats, the bhats, even their 'moles', the episodes in the first two chapters, everything is so real and depicted with such accuracy that I could feel it all happening before my very eyes—and couldn't help smiling!

It is simply amazing how an Englishman can paint India in words as Talbot Mundy has done. India is certainly one of the most beautiful countries of the world. The beauty of its landscape, the serenity of its temples and caves, the majesty of its peaks, and the multitude of people add an indescribable charm. In every way it is contrast personified.

Anyway, as I have lived in India and know the country and people, I find nothing strange, out of the ordinary, or peculiar in either the characters in this book or in any of its episodes. Besides, I don't think either the jade or the place described in the last five chapters could be fiction or merely Mr. Mundy's fantasy—entirely.

There is a place near Lhasa, called or used to be called, "Kangdez". The description of Kangdez as given in the "Shah Nameh" and other traditional books of the Zoroastrians compares with the regions of the Ahbors. Tradition claims Kangdez to be built by one of the Atlanto-Aryan Sages. The Zoroastrians call him "Siavek," and it could be "Tsiang-Vok" or "wong" in another dialect. He was one of the kings of the Kyani or "Kavas" dynasty. It is maintained that this ancient city, which had no parallel in beauty in the world, still exists with its ancient Fire-temple, only it is hidden now from the eyes of the mortals.

As regards the jade, it is said, too, that the early Atlantean kings of the Peshdad and Kyani dynasties possessed such gems and stones which would not only reflect their own minds and thoughts but their entire seven principles, and also the seven zones of the earth. Faridoon, Kai-Khushru used this for reasons.

Om, the Secret of the Ahbor Valley is the most beautiful book I have ever read. It is certainly mystic and philosophical, but there is nothing strange or wholly out of the realm of possibility in it.

Irene R. Ponsonby, Los Angeles, Calif.—All issues of *The Eclectic Theosophist* are worthy of commendation, but the issue of March 15 is outstanding. Each page has its full quota of stimulating and satisfying material.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Bequest from Boris de Zirkoff

Dora Kunz, National President of the T.S. American Section (Adyar) and Executive Editor of *The American Theosophist*, writes in the April 1981 issue of that journal:

"Some time ago Mr. de Zirkoff made a bequest to the Society of his library and his historical files, which include a great deal of material about H.P.B. This is a priceless collection that pertains not only to H.P.B., but also to her family, her writings and her life. These materials will arrive soon at Olcott where we are preparing a special archives room for them. In time, the archives will be available to students who wish to do research in this field; it will comprise immensely valuable resource material for future books. Our Librarian, Mrs. Swarna Wickremerante, has had special training in preserving old documents and her knowledge will be very useful in this endeavor.

"Mr. de Zirkoff, the last remaining of H.P.B.'s relatives, spent his life in spreading her ideas, especially in his editing of the *Collected Writings*. Mrs. Dara Eklund and Richard Robb will continue to work on the *Collected Writings* series. These two have been most helpful to Boris de Zirkoff all these years, and they will continue to cherish his memory in preparing these two volumes for future publication.

"Here at Olcott we have many old and rare volumes and, with the microfilm equipment in our library, we have microfilmed the old volumes of *Lucifer* and *The Theosophist* in our collection. Copies are now available to members if they wish to inquire from the Library..."

The Writings of William Q. Judge

Under this title W.T.S. Thackara in *Sunrise*, April 1981, reviews with stimulating comment Volume II of *Echoes of the Orient*, published last year by Point Loma Publications, Inc. *Eclectic* readers should be well informed of this publication, but may not know of another collection of Judge's writings. We quote the last two paragraphs of Thackara's article:

"Also to be noted is another fine anthology of Judge's writings published last year entitled *Theosophical Articles* (fnt. Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, 1980, two volumes, 1276 pages, index in volume two, \$25.00.) These are reissued in the conviction... that (they) are an indispensable aid in grasping the meaning of the Theosophical philosophy, and that recognition of his role and part in Theosophical organization and education is equally indispensable to an understanding of the Theosophical Movement.' The particular value of this two-volume edition lies in the arrangement of articles by subject rather than in chronological sequence.

"For the reader, if a choice must be made, it is simply a matter of preference. Each arrangement has its merits, and either edition will provide a wonderful source of inspiration and stability in daily living."

School of Theosophy, Krotana (Ojai, California)

Spring courses include "The Contribution of Theosophy to Christian Thought," conducted by Sten von Krusenstierna; "Issues of Concern to the Spiritual Seeker" (Diana Dunningham, Laurie Harris and Linda Wilson);

"Scientific Verification of Clairvoyance" (Dr. David D. Lyness); "The Yoga of Awareness" (Oliver Greene); and Joy Mills continues her "Studies in the Secret Doctrine." Featured are two seminars: "The Vedic Myth and Vision: Sources of the Secret Doctrine," six sessions conducted by Jeanine Miller, research assistant at the British Museum Library, with the M. Litt. degree from Durham University; and "The Mysticism of Martin Buber," 2 two-day seminar conducted by Dr. Robert S. McGinnis, Jr., Professor of Philosophy at Dillard University, New Orleans. There will also be a one-day (May 1) celebration featuring classical music and poetry readings, with discussion of the theosophical principles to be found in the aesthetic experience.

Books and Cassettes by Judith M. Tyberg

In response to inquiries we print the following list. Orders should be sent directly to: East-West Cultural Center, 2865 West 9th Street, Los Angeles, California 90006, except for *Sanskrit Keys*, published by Point Loma Publications, P.O. Box 6507, San Diego, Calif. 92106.

First Lessons in Sanskrit Grammar and Reading; 163 pp., cloth \$7.50; paper \$6.50.

The Language of the Gods; 304 pp. cloth \$8.95. Two thousand Sanskrit spiritual and philosophical terms of ancient and modern India presented in an original and creative manner.

Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom Religion; 163 pp., paper \$4.00. An exposition of the philosophical and religious teachings embodied in the Sanskrit terms used in Theosophical and occult literature.

Sanskrit Mantras—with English translation, and with Cassette Recording; 16 pp. Paper \$10.00.

Cassette Recording of Pronunciation of Words in the *Sanskrit Grammar*, and in *Language of the Gods*; \$7.50.

Holland is Busy—Booklets in Dutch

Everything Has Always Been There (sub-title: "Origin, Present Lot, and Destiny of Man Within Our Solar System"), price \$3.50, by Jan H. Moliijn (published by Het Theosofisch Genootschap, Loenesestraat 97, 2574 The Hague, paper \$3.50).

This is the story how, after a Calvinistic education, the author saw through the calcined dogmas of this orthodox faith and discovered the liberative teachings of Theosophy. Chapter titles are: Introduction; Seeking a Different Truth; I Become Acquainted with Theosophy; The Problems Accumulate; Point Loma; Hierarchies; Birth and Death; Spirit, Soul and Body; What is Truth? Brotherhood; Our Origin; The Meaning of Our Present Existence; Our Destiny; Appendix: Good and Evil; Alphabetical Index.

The booklet is intended for inquirers to whom Theosophy is new yet who are looking for a solution to life's riddles.

Protectors of Mankind by D.J.P.Kok (published by Stichting I.S.I.S., Blavatskyhuis, De Ruyterstraat 74, 2518 Av., The Hague). Four lectures: "The Lodge of Wisdom and Compassion": The Searching Man; Open and Hidden

Priesthood; The Ungrateful Compassion; The Hierarchical Structure of the Universe. (2) "The Masters of H.P. Blavatsky": Meeting the Master; H.P.B.'s Relation to the Masters; Who and What Are Those Masters? The Great Sacrifice; How and Where the Masters Work. (3) "The Path of the Pupil": Going Within; Man, Know Thyself; Man, a Stream of Consciousness; Man, a Twofold Being; The Inward Way; Dangers On The Path; The Outlook. (4) "Initiation in the Mysteries": Passivity: Source of Self-Deception; Human Consciousness: The Key To The Gate; Stages and Degrees of Initiation; What the Point Is; Initiation: Quickened Evolution; Why Should One...

The back cover states that this booklet is a warning and an appeal; a *warning* against the effects of blind faith in open and hidden priesthood in the world. (These can be found in the domain of religion and science as well as in philosophy and politics. Blind faith in statements of 'experts,' but especially in the practices they commend, are leading mankind from one crisis to another, resulting in the 'end' of civilization. Besides, there is a blindfold application of means and methods, commended by quasi-occultists as bringing 'widening of consciousness,' but which in reality has an opposite effect.) It is an *appeal* to develop spiritual discrimination, enabling man to accept guidance of the PROTECTORS OF MANKIND, without losing independence. Through all centuries those natural leaders of mankind have tried to show the way to real emancipation. Their efforts, however, can only bear fruit if man not only is ready to listen but is ready to practice, by means ready at hand, their instructions (admonitions) as to daily life.

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The beauty and the splendor of these teachings fill the soul with awe. It needs but the proper comprehension of them, so firmly to fix the mind and the soul to the eternal Truth that nothing will ever shake them in the future. Ay, if we can but see, there lies unfolded the Great Mystery of evolution. Those who have advanced along the path have left their records behind them; and there they stand, those glorious entities, armies of them; the lowest are those just beyond us, the chelas, and then higher still are the Masters, and the Masters of the Masters; and then the Chohans; and the Mahâ-Chohans; and then the Dhyâni-Chohans; and then the Dhyâni-Buddhas; and thus endlessly, on and up; for infinity is limitless and endless. And this process of hierarchical development has been going on from eternity in the past, and will continue into eternity in the future.

—G. de Purucker: *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*, p. 333

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